

STEERING COMMITTEE

Tuesday, December 2, 2014

6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

MPRB Headquarters

Meeting Notes

Committee members present: Nick Cichowicz, Jay Cowles, Steve Cramer, Joanne Kaufman, Richard Mammen, Nancy Nasi, Neil Reardon, Paul Reyelts, Philip Schwartz, Carletta Sweet, Dave Tinjum, Ted Tucker, Sally Westby, Craig Wilson, David Wilson

[Please see [website](#) for Steering Committee Member affiliations]

Guests: Peter Bruce, Paul Forsline, Dave Hile (alternate), Sam Johnson, Jana Metge, Kim Rogers, Witt Siasoco, Rob Vegemast, Doug Wallace, Dale White

Staff/consultants present: Matthew Bell, John Erwin, Lydia Major, Kjersti Monson, Erik Nilsson, Colleen O'Dell, Don Ostrom, Tyler Pederson, Jennifer Ringold, Michael Schroeder, Lacy Shelby, Marsha Wagner, Liz Wielinski,

1. Welcome

The inaugural meeting of the Steering Committee (SC) was called to order at 6:36 p.m. by Jennifer Ringold, Director of Strategic Planning, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB). After welcoming the people in attendance Ms. Ringold turned the meeting over to Kjersti Monson to provide an overview.

Kjersti Monson, Director, Long Range Planning, Minneapolis, expressed excitement about convening this group around the issues of livability and public realm. A lot of activities by other entities, both at the City and Park Board, have led to taking on this project. The Minneapolis Downtown Council developed its Downtown 2025 Plan; and earlier this year when Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation's Gil Penalosa did a placemaking residency, they convened a conversation about downtown public realm that involved a lot of key stakeholders from the region, City staff and elected officials, and Park Board. Subsequently Minneapolis Council Member Frey guided creation of a public realm enhancement working group, led by Lacy Shelby, Principal Urban Designer, City of Minneapolis Community Planning & Economic Development (CPED), which has been meeting for about six months. That working group involves the planning group, urban design, development services, public works, and others at the city who need to be involved in the conversation. MPRB doing its Service Area Master Plan at this time led to an opportunity to think in an integrated way about the city network and how it connects to the public realm network.

2. Introductions

Ms. Ringold invited Steering Committee members, Park Board and City staff, and others in attendance to introduce themselves.

3. Data Practices

Referencing a [Data Practices Summary](#) provided by the Minneapolis City Attorney's office, Ms. Monson provided a brief explanation of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, quoting Minn. Stat. § 13.02, subd. 7 in defining government data: "all data collected, created, received, maintained, or disseminated by any government entity regardless of its physical form, storage media or conditions of use." Ms. Monson added that any correspondence about this process can be called

through a data practices request. She cautioned SC members not to mix personal and professional communications, and to not say anything in another format that they wouldn't feel comfortable saying in a meeting or in person.

4. Project Overview [[PPT Pages 4, 6-7](#)]

Ms. Monson explained that two separate documents will be created by two separate entities, but that they want the documents to be integrated. The City is creating a policy document that will have a physical framework element. The City Project Team will be engaging with this SC, its Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and also downtown neighborhoods, coordinating agencies and other stakeholders. The City is not hiring a consultant, but is doing the work in-house.

Ms. Ringold said that the MPRB will be engaging with the same groups and committees as the City, but also has a consultant team comprised of LHB, SRF and MIG. They will attempt to coordinate schedules to make efficient use of time and effort. MPRB plans to produce a Service Area Master Plan for Downtown Minneapolis by the end of this process which will set a vision for future park and recreation improvements, management, operations, and development.

Ms. Monson added that the City's policy document will focus on guiding the enhancement of priority streets and public spaces. It will provide a unified vision to inform and coordinate public and private investments in the public realm. This is a key point since neither the City nor the private sector can do it alone. Together they can achieve some of these enhancements, for example, the recently-introduced Parklet Program or by instituting something like the permitting process used by the City of Los Angeles. Once the vision has been created, it is easier to implement improvements.

5. Development and Approval Processes of Plans

Ms. Ringold said that the MPRB and City have separate approval processes [[PPT Page 8](#)]. After the MPRB takes this through draft plan development, it will go through a 45-day public comment period. The document will then go to the Planning Committee, a public hearing, and finally to the full Park Board for approval.

Ms. Shelby said the City process will also involve a rigorous community engagement process. A plan draft will go out for public comment, then will go to the City Planning Commission as well as Zoning and Planning before advancing to the City Council for approval.

6. Detail Information about Plans and Project Schedules

Ms. Ringold said that the Service Area Master Planning for the Park Board fits into a system-wide vision. MPRB has five service areas in Minneapolis; four are neighborhood-based, the fifth one is the Downtown Service Area (DSA) [[PPT Page 10](#)]. By 2018 the goal is to have Master Plans for every neighborhood park within the City of Minneapolis. In answer to a question about how the population of the DSA compares to the other four, Ms. Ringold said that the DSA population is approximately one-third or less than that of the other service areas. Service areas are divided by geography, not population.

Continuing, Ms. Ringold said that at the conclusion of this process the plans will guide system-wide capital investments for long-term operations, maintenance and programming. Referencing the DSA map [[PPT Page 11](#)], Ms. Ringold said this will be different from the other service areas because it involves more than looking at existing parks. They will consider areas where new parks or trails may be appropriate, and what amenities may need to be provided. The DSA is unique in the opportunities, funding, partnerships, and relationships that might exist.

Ms. Shelby said that the City's Downtown Public Realm (DPR) Framework will include a physical inventory of assets that are in the public realm. It will examine programmable spaces and the network and connective fabric involved, including layers of transportation, and will identify new tools to enable private investment to happen in the public realm. The boundaries of the DPR are similar to MPRB's Service Area Master Plan but are a little more porous, including areas across the river and adjacent neighborhoods.

Over the summer the City collected data on existing amenities in the DPR, such as types of benches, vegetation, bike racks, etc., that will be collected into a physical framework plan. The DPR Framework will also look at development guidelines to enable investments, and examine current policies that guide investments. An Event Programming Guide will identify programmable spaces Downtown, both publicly and privately owned, that could host activities and events; so far 81 sites have been identified. They will look at integrated modes of transportation, i.e. how bike, LRT, bus, and skyway networks intersect with each other as people move in and out of Downtown. An Implementation Guide will be created that will be a tool for those who want to work with the City and make investments in different amenities or features.

The City's and MPRB's process for the plans began formally in November with the first TAC meeting, and will take about a year to complete. Ms. Ringold added that the process diagram [[PPT Page 16](#)] is helpful because it shows how the processes intersect but result in very different outcomes.

7. Role of the SC

Ms. Ringold explained that MPRB has Community Advisory Committees for all of its projects. In collaborating with the City of Minneapolis it was decided to call this body a Steering Committee. The [Steering Committee charge](#) as established by resolution of the MPRB on August 20, 2014, is to:

- Become knowledgeable about the project and its scope and advise MPRB staff and consultants throughout the planning process
- Contribute to broad community engagement by acting as primary contact for the SC's represented communities, and by enhancing the project's interaction with a wide range of stakeholders; in addition to sit-down meetings the SC will use surveys and events to collect data from residents, visitors and workers Downtown
- Assist with ongoing communication of technical plan elements to the general public
- Make recommendations to the MPRB Commissioners on service area-wide vision, goals and principles
- Make recommendations to the MPRB Commissioners in support of individual park master plans created through community-driven process

8. Relationships between Committees and Reporting

Occasionally small groups will be convened to coordinate that information. Members of the SC will be asked to provide expertise in helping with connections, bringing information, knowing what already exists so we are not duplicating effort. There are a lot of ongoing projects [[PPT Page 20](#)] in Downtown: St. Anthony Falls or the Central Riverfront Master Plan, Nicollet Mall, Downtown Commons, Waterworks. A lot of work has been done to catalog and organize what is currently being done.

In regard to ongoing projects, Ms. Monson quoted SC member David Wilson: "There are a lot of nice parts but how are they connected?" The graphic on the Destinations slide [[PPT Page 9](#)] shows how they are connected, and when key destinations and attractions are layered onto the big event and

gathering spaces, a real need to make the disparate parts into a unified whole becomes apparent. Three key factors have been identified:

- Coordination: how do the public and private sectors work together, how do nonprofits come into the picture, how are we working together toward a unified goal [PPT Pages 21-22: Nicollet Mall]
- Integration: overlaying transit, skyways, streets and destinations, which may lead to a future phase of work around wayfinding [PPT Pages 23-24: Final Four Bid and Waterworks]
- Operations: providing the greatest hurdle: who is going to pay for and maintain this?

As she continued to lead the group through a number of images from other projects [PPT Pages 25-28], Ms. Monson said these are hard questions and they will be looking for creative new ideas from the SC to help create a unified and integrated public realm. Ms. Ringold affirmed that in these projects they will not be reinventing but will capture the great work that has been accomplished to date by various entities.

Before proceeding with the visioning work, Ms. Ringold talked about next steps. Both TAC and SC meetings were held today [December 2, 2014]; the next SC meeting will be on January 15. She then fielded some general questions on the information presented thus far.

Q: From a policy perspective, is this or any group addressing the issue of conservancies, joint use agreements or other structural models?

A: One of the things that we will want to capture, perhaps in both plans but definitely in the Service Area Master Plan, is what are those alternative operating structures that might make sense. MIG and others in this room have expertise in this area. Ms. Monson added that from the City perspective that is absolutely a part of their plan. The inventories presented by Ms. Shelby provide the base data to create an Event Programming Guide with an inventory of programmable spaces. Through this process the City will develop partnerships and provide opportunities because more can be accomplished collectively.

Q: The DSA area is rather static but some projects that affect Downtown are slightly outside of the boundaries. Is the boundary porous, and will the SC be able to reach beyond the boundary?

A: Ms. Ringold said both the City and MPRB understand that the Downtown boundary might move over time as development patterns happen. There is a correlation between what is happening Downtown and just on the other side of the imaginary boundary. For example, 800 children live in the North Loop and we may not be able to provide athletic fields for them there, but Bryn Mawr Meadows is nearby. Ms. Shelby added that a benefit of working on these projects jointly is that they can look at some of the connective structures, i.e. Samatar Crossing and how it might connect to Cedar Riverside and Currie Park.

9. Engagement Discussion

Ms. Ringold presented six questions to the SC to assist in determining how they can create a more robust community engagement strategy for these two processes.

Who are the individuals or organized groups (including potential critics) who you know would want to or expect to be consulted on a project like this, and who could become major critics or supporters?

- Hennepin-Lyndale reconstruction project on how it connects to downtown – Task Force
- University of Minnesota College of Design
- Youth: Youth Coordinating Board, StreetWorks Project, YMCA, YWCA, Fair School, Youthlink/Youth Opportunity Center
- Homelessness: St. Stephens, Sharing & Caring Hands

- Bicycle (represented on TAC)
- Running or Pedestrian Club (Pedestrian Advisory Committee on TAC) – it would be interesting to get into running clubs, possibly through Heart/Lung Association
- Nice Ride
- Loppet Foundation
- Convention Center /Meet Minneapolis (represented on TAC)
- Condominium associations/HOA Collaborative encompasses 17 major condominium buildings
- Catholic Charities
- AEON
- People Serving People
- Salvation Army
- Westminster Church
- Basilica – Block Party
- Cultural facilities – Walker Art Center

Which networks, blogs, or major social media users (including professional societies) are you aware of that would be interested in downtown spaces and places, and who could help spread the word?

[This project will have a blog starting in January.]

- StreetsMN
- UrbanMSP
- River Life blog – University of Minnesota
- MinnPost – does a lot on urban issues Downtown
- Mill City Times
- Hennepin Theatre Trust/Tom Hoch – extensive network; cultural facilities Downtown have been underrepresented to visitors and workers
- Greater MSP has launched an initiative to market Downtown, the heart of which is potential future public realm space
- Daily Planet, grassroots online effort; could point to this project's blog
- Minneapolis Community and Technical College, MnSCU
- St. Thomas University – relationship with institution, and relationship with students and faculty
- Minneapolis Parks Foundation – good blog (represented on TAC)
- Minneapolis Riverfront Partnership (represented on TAC)
- North Central University – soccer field
- Friends of Loring – gardening club
- Historic Preservation Groups – city staff and Preservation Alliance
- St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board
- Partnering with congregations – digital and print newsletters
- Northern Spark
- Professional sports teams – large public realm facilities (represented on TAC)
- Minneapolis Bicycle Coalition
- Skateboard blogs: Platinum Seagulls, VillagePsychic.net
- Building Owners and Managers Association
- Organizations of rental property owners Downtown
- Mill City Running

Are there any existing visitor surveys or research (e.g., economic impact study, convention sales) efforts underway or planned? [For example, exit or satisfaction surveys]

- Loring Greenway Association – extensive research on pedestrian use by week/day/time
- Downtown Improvement District annual survey of public realm questions to mark progress over time; current cycle just completed on December 1 – David Wilson
- Nice Ride usage data
- Skyway statistics – Peter Bruce
- Meet Minneapolis data, city traffic counts
- Metro Transit data (represented on TAC)

Do you have connections at any of the major property management companies downtown, both for residential and commercial real estate?

- Warehouse District property owners – Joanne Kaufman
- Downtown clients, sustainability and LEED certification, data on transportation habits – Craig Wilson
- North Loop Neighborhood Association (represented on SC; not present tonight)
- Gittleman Management Association (owns majority of condos downtown), newsletter - _____

Do you have contacts with any providers of social services downtown or downtown faith-based communities?

[Not previously mentioned]

- Walker Art Center and Minneapolis Institute of Arts
- Connection or translation – Somali and Latino communities
- YWCA/YMCA
- Mayo Clinic – public realm and exercise/health
- Food Truck network/association
- Pedicab drivers, bike messengers
- Central Library

For intercept outreach, which locations or events will best target downtown residents? What about employees? What about visitors?

- Mill City Farmers Market, open every Saturday May through October
- Thursday Nicollet Mall Farmers Market, greatest density at Seventh and Eighth Streets
- Caribou at Target Field Station – resident and commuter traffic
- Hennepin County Government Center / Familia Skatepark – skateboarders
- Stone Arch Bridge, Downtown end – residents, students
- IDS Building – crossroad
- South end of Nicollet Mall – Westminster, Loring Greenway
- Sporting events
- Concerts
- Step-Up Program
- Holidazzle Village
- Busy bus stops
- Busy Nice Ride stations
- North Loop/Other Neighborhood Associations – monthly meetings
- Large corporations can funnel information to employees – Target, Wells Fargo
- Loring Park – large, permitted events
- LRT station(s) downtown – online survey
- Outside of the Downtown Target store – after work, 5 or 6 p.m.

- Fringe areas and populations – Downtown is not just white middle class
- Gold Medal Park
- Cancer Survivor Park
- Homeless Shelter, i.e. Salvation Army, 7 p.m.

A spreadsheet will be created and distributed to SC members to record their conduits or connections to these locations/entities.

10. Public Comment

Ms. Ringold announced that at MPRB meetings there has to be an opportunity for public comment. She invited audience members to participate with questions or comments.

- Doug Wallace, Loring Greenway Association – Neighborhoods surrounding Loring Park have an enormous number of employees (several hundred) that work downtown. They are all funneled through Loring Greenway on their way to/from work, on bikes and walking. Ms. Ringold said that might be an opportunity to offer them a card with a link to an online survey that they can complete later.
- Jana Metge, Citizens for a Loring Park Community – Emerson Spanish Immersion School in Loring Park; Rayito de Sol, a huge Spanish Immersion preschool on south end of Nicollet Avenue; three Somali preschools on Nicollet Avenue and Fourteenth Street; 1000-1500 Russian-speaking elders living in three different high-rises near Loring Park.
- Dave Hile, Friends of Loring Park – Asked how this work will relate to the existing Loring Park Neighborhood Master Plan. Ms. Ringold said this group will set high-level direction. When the Master Plans for individual parks are being developed they will have to break off and do some additional, localized community meetings. E.g., for Loring Park they will build off existing Master Plans.
- John Erwin – Is there a restaurant association downtown? If so, they should be contacted. Regarding food trucks, we could hand out a survey to complete while people are waiting for their food order.
- Witt Siasoco, City of Skate – Thinks the class issue needs to be addressed; homelessness and youth in particular in Downtown matter to him and others.
- Peter Bruce, Pedestrian Studies Consulting – Intercept surveys at certain locations, Convention Center skyway particularly during winter.
- _____ – Condominium associations conduct meetings throughout the year; that would be a good place to connect with residents. It might also be worthwhile to contact the Minneapolis Club.
- _____ – Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, People Serving People are populations Downtown that should be included in this group as well. Regarding creating greenspace, implement edible landscape.
- _____ – Regarding condominiums, building managers send out a weekly newsletter that could be used. Referring to edible things, cattails are edible and there are plenty in Loring Park.
- Jana Metge – Women's Club.

Before continuing with the final discussion question, Ms. Monson added an agenda item. Currently this project involves an awkwardly-named, very public-sounding set of documents that are related but separate. They would like to use one name for this initiative. The Project Teams will come up with a few alternative ideas to graphically represent and name this initiative, and will present them to the SC members for their help in defining the name.

What do you imagine for the City of Minneapolis in the coming years and decades?

- Sally Westby: As we develop this plan, hopes that we will also focus on the existing infrastructure that we have, i.e. Loring Park, Loring Greenway, Nicollet Mall, making sure it is well-maintained and that it is not falling apart like it is now. Also, a city that is really walkable, especially at night, where there's someplace to go besides three blocks on the Nicollet Mall that are kind of fun.
- Ted Tucker: Connections; make riverfront discoverable from Downtown, removing the mysterious gap. Also, Minneapolis Public Works will come to see itself as important to the creation and care of a great public realm as is the Park Board.
- David Wilson: Connectedness; how we use our public realm and parks Downtown to connect all of the people, different communities, visitors, surrounding neighborhoods, because just putting great public realm structure in place is useless if we don't have all of our community using it in harmony together.
- Dave Tinjum: Would like to see the end of surface parking lots, replacing some of them with public realm greenspace.
- Philip Schwartz: Agreed with what Sally Westby said, but added putting at an end to wide, four-lane, one-way streets. Fast-moving cars and high traffic volume make Downtown an uncomfortable place to be around. Also, a ban on skyway level retail, encouraging street level retail.
- Jay Cowles: Safety, making Downtown safer and more walkable, 24-hours/year-round.
- Craig Wilson: Introduced terminology from landscape architecture to help visualize the connecting we want to do, "Path & Place," creating more interesting paths and destinations, making the journey interesting along the way so that there is a sense of discovery. The only way to achieve any of this is to embrace density, find the right balance to create a livable Downtown. Envisions many more residents in Downtown, and a much more vibrant atmosphere.
- Nancy Nasi: Hopes that people become more active; add bike trails, making them more accessible to people.
- Joanne Kaufman: A city where people do everything everywhere, not just in central business district during the day and the Warehouse District just at night. They are both fun and safe neighborhoods to be in all of the time.
- Nick Cichowicz: After this process is completed, a way for the community to be more involved, to offer feedback. Everything we are talking about here will take a certain amount of time; how can we get the community more involved so we continue to have perspective from different stakeholders?
- Dick Mammen: Downtown does not have many places for families to grow, where children can play. Hopes that we start anticipating the future, i.e. what happens when the Post Office closes.
- Neil Reardon: A vibrant place for visitors and workers. Need more residents, both for things we want to do in the future and for maintenance.

Before adjourning, Ms. Monson thanked the SC members and said she was thrilled with their contributions. Ms. Ringold introduced Marsha Wagner as the one contact point for sending emails with agendas and minutes, and for receiving and forwarding questions. She also mentioned that there will be websites for the City and MPRB projects, and they will be linking to the blog.

11. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.